

### **- Congress Gives FDA Authority to Regulate Tobacco -**

*Washington D.C.* – After a decade of work by public health organizations to protect children from the dangers of cigarettes, the Food and Drug Administration will now have the authority to regulate tobacco products, thanks to legislation passed by Congress this week. U.S. Rep. John Hall (D-Dover) helped Congress pass the Family Smoking Prevention, and Tobacco Control Act (H.R. 1256) today by a vote of 307 to 97. This legislation will give the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) the authority to regulate the marketing campaigns of tobacco companies and will require them to disclose the ingredients within their product and change them if deemed necessary by the FDA. President Obama intends to sign this bill into law early next week.

"This is a major victory for parents, kids, and everyone's health and another way we're working to change the culture of powerful interests in Washington," said Hall. "Big Tobacco lobbyists have prevented regulation of cigarettes for far too long, contributing to the deaths of millions of Americans. Tobacco is a drug and the FDA should have authority to regulate it like any other drug."

Tobacco based products remain the leading cause of preventable deaths in America. Each year close to half a million Americans die due to tobacco use leaving an additional 8.6 suffering from chronic illnesses caused by the effect of long term smoking. Over 3,500 young people per day try a cigarette for the first time, while an additional 1,000 develop a regular smoking habit. Roughly one out of every three of these kids will die prematurely due to conditions caused by smoking.

"There is absolutely no question that this is an immediate health concern to both our children and our families," said Hall. "We need to be able to monitor the advertising of tobacco products, so that these companies can't single out young people. This bill gives the FDA the authority to discourage tobacco sales to minors as well as the ability to educate the youth of America about the importance of healthy living."

Under this legislation, the FDA will also require that tobacco companies put more explicit health warnings in both their advertisements and cigarette packaging and prohibit the use of misleading descriptions on "reduced harm" products such as "light," "mild," or "low" brands. Additionally, H.R. 1256 will reinstate the 1996 rule that restricts the marketing of tobacco

products towards youths.

H.R. 1256 is currently supported by over 1000 prominent health and other organizations including the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association, and the American Lung Association.

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